

CHAPTER XIV.

REFORMATION AND REVOLUTION IN SCOTLAND— JOHN MAJOR, THE MARTYRS, SIR DAVID LINDSAY.

THE sixteenth century witnessed in Scotland not only a reformation in the Church, but a revolution in the State. It dawned on the reign of James IV.; it set on the reign of James VI., the son of the ill-starred Mary and the successor of the fortunate Elizabeth. In this long interval the history of Scotland is one long tragedy, in spite of the promise of the fourth James' forceful reign. Disastrous defeat eclipsed the prestige which James had won for his country during a brief interval of efficacious government—defeat at Flodden, Solway Moss, and Pinkie. Three lengthy minorities—those of James V., Mary, and James VI.—supervened in all too quick succession, and exposed the kingdom to faction strife, civil war, repeated invasion. Religious persecution mingled its shadow with the gloom of faction and anarchy, and watered with the blood of the martyrs the soil from which the seed of the reformation was to spring up. It was in an age of storm and stress, of trial and suffering, that the forces that made modern, Protestant, democratic Scotland were born.

In spite of its disastrous close and the many woes which that disaster brought in its train, the reign of the fourth James afforded a foretaste of what Scotland was capable of accomplishing under an effectual government.¹ His reign may, in truth, justly be termed the introduction to the modern epoch in Scottish history. It witnessed the operation of new forces, new aspirations, which gained strength from the struggle and misery of the next seventy years, and proved their vitality in the gradual transformation of Scotland, after further struggle and suffering in the seventeenth century, into one of the most intellectually and politically progressive of European nations. Politically, intellectually, commercially, Scotland developed a